

Marilyn N. Musgrave

1949–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE
REPUBLICAN FROM COLORADO

2003–



Congressional Pictorial Directory
109th Congress

MARILYN MUSGRAVE JOINED THE 108TH CONGRESS (2003–2005) as the United States Representative from eastern Colorado. Her modest upbringing in a small rural community in Colorado helped to forge her core beliefs as a social and fiscal conservative.¹

Marilyn Musgrave was born on January 27, 1949, in Greeley, Colorado. She attended Eaton High School and worked as a waitress and cleaned houses to earn money during her free time. She married Steve Musgrave while attending Colorado State University in 1968. After earning a B.A. in social studies, Musgrave taught school in Genoa, Colorado, before moving to Fort Morgan, where she and her husband started their own agricultural business, and then she devoted herself full-time to raising her children.² Once her children were in school, Musgrave became the “consummate volunteer,” working for a variety of community organizations, including various Republican causes. Her active volunteer work laid the foundation for her future career in elective politics.³

Musgrave’s political career began when she won a seat on the school board of Fort Morgan in 1990, a position that she held for four years. After completing the intensive Republican Leadership Program to prepare for a future in politics, Musgrave was elected to the Colorado state legislature in 1994. During her four-year tenure as a state representative, and her subsequent time in the Colorado state senate from 1999 through 2003, Musgrave supported a variety of conservative legislative initiatives, including tax cuts, free market solutions, the promotion of the sanctity of human life, support for traditional marriage, and the protection of Second Amendment rights.⁴

When Republican Representative Bob Schaffer retired from the House to fulfill his three-term limit pledge in 2002, Musgrave entered the race for the open congressional seat which covers most of eastern Colorado, swinging northward to Greeley on the northern edge of the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. Musgrave won the August 13, 2002, Republican primary with two-thirds of the vote. Shortly after her victory, Musgrave outlined her political agenda: "I want to go to Washington to continue the conservative Reagan Republican agenda of lower taxes, limited government, a strong military, defense of our constitutional freedoms and protection of our pro-life, pro-family values."⁵ In the general election, Musgrave defeated Democrat Stan Matsunaka, winning all 18 counties in the district, and continuing its 30-year tradition of sending Republicans to Congress. In 2004, running against Matsunaka again, Musgrave was re-elected.⁶

Musgrave serves on the Agriculture Committee, the Resources Committee, and the Education and the Workforce Committee. As a member of the Small Business Committee, Musgrave became chairman of the Subcommittee on Workforce, Empowerment, and Government Programs in her second term. Musgrave was elected by her peers to serve on the House Republican Steering Committee. She also is a leading member of the influential Republican Study Committee and is the Policy Chair of the Western Caucus.

As a Representative, Musgrave held true to her campaign promise to continue the conservative agenda. She opposed a Republican-sponsored measure to hike the federal gas tax, remaining firm in her conviction that "raising the gas tax is not only bad policy, it is bad politics."⁷ Musgrave emerged on the national stage when she sponsored the Federal Marriage Amendment, which defined marriage as a union of one man and one woman.⁸ On September 6, 2004, *Newsweek* magazine called Musgrave the rising star of Congress.

FOR FURTHER READING

Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, "Marilyn Musgrave," <http://bioguide.congress.gov>

NOTES

- 1 "Our Campaigns," <http://www.ourcampaigns.com/cgi-bin/r.cgi/CandidateDetail.html?&CandidateID=2467>. (accessed 30 March 2004).
- 2 "Our Campaigns."
- 3 M.E. Sprengelmeyer, "In the Spotlight for Better or Worse: Rep. Marilyn Musgrave," 27 November 2003, Scripps Howard News Service.
- 4 *Politics in America*, 2004 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 2003): 183.
- 5 "Our Campaigns."
- 6 *Almanac of American Politics*, 2004 (Washington, D.C.: National Journal Inc., 2003): 319–321; "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," <http://clerk.house.gov/members/electionInfo/elections.html>.
- 7 Bill McAllister and Mike Soraghan, "Beauprez, Musgrave Feted in D.C. as New Colorado House Members," 8 January 2003, *Denver Post*: A-6; Marilyn Musgrave, "Building More Roads Without Raising Taxes," 11 February 2004, *The Hill*: 22.
- 8 "Press Release: Musgrave Amendment Strengthens Marriage," http://wwwa.house.gov/musgrave/108th%20Web/pr_030522_federal_marriage_amendment.htm (accessed 2 April 2004).